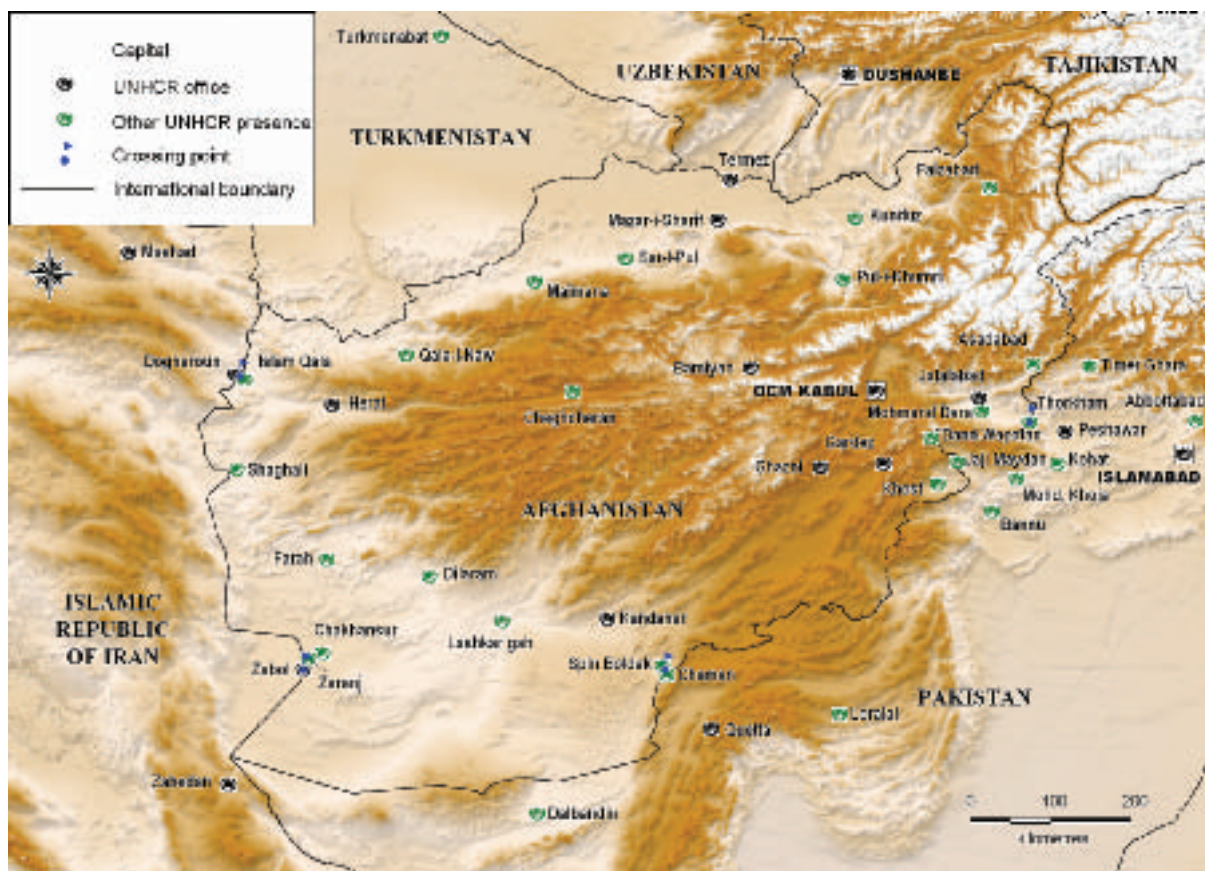


Afghanistan



Afghanistan

Main objectives

Facilitate the voluntary return of displaced Afghans (refugees and IDPs) to communities of their choice in conditions of safety and dignity, and ensure that returnees enjoy access to rights and protection in common with all other Afghan citizens; ensure that the initial reintegration needs of returnees and IDPs are met in a timely manner, and that

long-term development programmes address the challenge of sustainable refugee and IDP returns. Provide support to IDPs in areas of displacement; help the authorities to deal with reintegration issues as an integral element of all major national programmes; ensure that refugee status determination and associated procedures are put in place for refugees and asylum-seekers in Afghanistan.

Persons of concern				
Main origin/Type of population	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Returnees (from Pakistan)	375,500	343,100	49	60
Returnees (from the Islamic Republic of Iran)	269,400	142,300	36	39
IDPs	184,300	-	-	-

Impact

- The numbers returning to Afghanistan were lower than in 2002, but still significant. In 2003, a total of 485,400 refugees returned with assistance from UNHCR and its partners, along with some 82,000 IDPs, bringing the total number of returns since the launch of the operation in 2001 to over three million. As in 2002, large numbers of Afghans returned from Iran without any assistance.
- Although refugee return has in one sense contributed to normalizing conditions in Afghanistan, it has also placed a great strain on the country's still weak infrastructure. The transport grant provided by UNHCR to returning families remained one of the largest direct injections of cash into the Afghan economy. Relatively small-scale, UNHCR-funded income-generating activities served to complement larger-scale public works programmes that aim to provide temporary or semi-permanent employment to returnees and other vulnerable categories. The construction of some 52,000 homes has partly alleviated the country's rural housing deficit.
- UNHCR's initial reintegration activities (principally in the fields of shelter, water, and income generation) were carried out as planned, with the Government taking on a more active role in return and reintegration activities.

Working environment

The context

The 2001 Bonn agreement scheduled two major events for 2003: the launch of a Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) Programme, and the holding of a *Loya Jirga* (Grand Assembly) to approve a new national constitution.

The DDR process was somewhat delayed. This fact, along with the continued limited capacity of the central Government and the ongoing lack of effective legislative, administrative and judicial structures, contributed to an unsettled security environment. The application and enforcement of law remains a key challenge – particularly as regards access to land and property.

The DDR process started and it is hoped that this, and the successful conclusion of the Constitutional Loya Jirga will result in an improved security environment for 2004. Following the approval of the constitution, the country is now preparing for elections, due to take place in 2004.

Over the year, increased efforts were made to find solutions for Afghanistan's IDPs. The number of displaced people dropped to around 200,000 – down from one million at the end of 2001. In July 2003, the Government, UNHCR and their partners in the Consultative Group for returnees and IDPs agreed upon a national strategy for IDPs which focuses on three

Income and expenditure (USD)					
Annual programme and Supplementary programme budgets					
	Revised budget	Income from contributions (earmarked at the country level)	Other funds available ¹ (inc. income earmarked at the subregional level)	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	286,979	770,176	797,993	1,568,169	286,698
SB	121,328,351	60,824,278	32,094,055	92,918,333	90,432,035
Total	121,615,330	61,594,454	32,892,048	94,486,502	90,718,733

¹ Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance (amounting to USD 0.5 million for the AB and USD 0.8 million for the SB) and adjustments (of which USD 25.3 million for the SB represent transfers of income earmarked at the subregional level).
The above figures do not include costs at headquarters.

Note: The Supplementary programme budgets do not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

elements: prevention of further displacement; assistance in IDP camps or settlements; and the pursuit of durable solutions appropriate to specific IDP groups.

Constraints

Lack of security in parts of the country was a major concern in 2003, the main causes being localized struggles between warlords, banditry, and ethnic conflict, along with other manifestations of crime, including the drugs trade.

Some of the greatest threats to returnees occurred in the north-west. The most serious security risks to UN and NGO staff, however, occurred in the south, south-east and the east. Towards the end of the year, following the murder of a UNHCR protection officer in Ghazni, movements in these regions were seriously restricted, hindering the monitoring of projects and conditions for returnees. Assisted repatriation from Pakistan was suspended.

The drought that had beset the region for the past six years subsided in most of Afghanistan but its effects are still being felt in the south, further delaying the return of displaced people and impeding reintegration activities such as house construction.

Meanwhile, Government capacity remains very weak both at central and regional levels. Major national development programmes have been slow to materialize, and there is still no formal financial or banking system. The resulting administrative difficulties are aggravated by security concerns.

Funding

The firm donor commitment to the operation seen in 2001 and 2002 continued throughout the year 2003, enabling UNHCR to implement activities largely as planned – despite a slow down in funding through the summer months that resulted in the organization having to freeze some planned activities in August 2003, notably the construction of some 8,000 housing units. Additional funding was pledged later in the year, though too late to resume activities that had been stopped.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

UNHCR carried out several thousand returnee monitoring missions to assess the level of integration and potential difficulties of returnees. One key concern was the general absence of the rule of law. Monitors looked into abuse and harassment by local commanders, difficulties in accessing land and ensuring restitution of property, and harassment and intimidation of women. They also monitored the access of girls to education and of returnees and IDPs to humanitarian assistance when needed, as well as striving to ensure the rights and safety of asylum-seekers and refugees.

During the year, the Office reinforced returnee monitoring by strengthening its partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The information collected during the returnee monitoring missions was analyzed and presented at regular meetings of the Protection and Human Rights Network. These were followed up with key ministries, sometimes with support from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA), as well as in national fora, notably the Human Rights Advisory Group and the Consultative Group on Returnees and IDPs.

UNHCR and NRC continued to build up the network of information and legal aid centres for returnees, staffed by Afghan lawyers, and used by both women and men. The centres are located at arrival points and in the main cities of return.

The organization emphasized training and building the capacity of implementing partners and government authorities. Training sessions covered the implementation of the 2002 Decree on Dignified Return and the related responsibilities of local police, judges, and district and provincial officials. Other workshops addressed the rights and participation of returnees and IDPs in the ongoing political process. Additional sessions concentrated on land-related issues and the rights of the child.

During 2003, thematic groups or task forces were set up to follow up on issues relating to children and women (in the north), and on property and land (in Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar). In Bamyán, a Return



A widow helping her sons to rebuild their house in Kabul.
UNHCR/L. Ros

Shura (council) was established by UNHCR and Ministry for Repatriation and Reintegration (MoRR).

In autumn 2003, MoRR and UNHCR established a Displaced Persons' Council (made up of displaced Pashtuns from the north) to bring IDPs into direct communication with the Government.

UNHCR and MoRR signed a tripartite agreement on voluntary repatriation with the Government of the Netherlands in March 2003. The Office monitored

forced returns of Afghans under the Tripartite Agreements with France and the United Kingdom. In 2003, four persons were forcefully removed from France and 320 from the United Kingdom. In addition, MoRR staff have been trained to monitor returns from non-neighbouring countries and to be fully operational at Kabul airport.

Activities and assistance

Community services: A network and referral system has been set up to assist vulnerable returnees, a category which accounts for an estimated 10 per cent of the total beneficiary population. Training sessions have been run to help staff identify vulnerable groups and to prepare returnees to find jobs. Needy IDPs have been given some direct assistance. A pilot project for community empowerment, child protection and establishment of women's shuras has been initiated in the east.

Domestic needs/Household support: As in the past, UNHCR distributed a variety of relief items to returnees (refugees or IDPs) and to IDPs in areas of displacement. UNHCR also contributed to the government-led Winterization Preparedness Project, providing vulnerable IDPs and returnees with tents, plastic sheeting, blankets and quilts, heating stoves and kerosene or a cash grant.

Health/Nutrition: Most activities in this sector have been undertaken by other agencies, with UNHCR interventions limited to support to medical posts at IDP camps and settlements, some mobile clinics, medical posts at transit/encashment centres, ambulance services for returnees/IDPs and hygiene education.

Income generation: Discussions were held with long-term development agencies regarding the targeting of areas of return. In addition, UNHCR supported a number of labour-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation projects, along with a number of small-scale cash-for-work projects for returnees and IDPs, including cooperative projects (poultry, silkworms) in the North, tailoring and carpentry activities in the East, a peanut oil factory and wool spinning for IDPs in the South, vocational training for returnees and IDPs in the West, patou-weaving and welding workshops and quilt-making in the central part of the country.

Legal assistance: Key activities included returnee monitoring, establishment of information and legal aid centres, training and capacity-building for partners and local authorities, and the provision of information to refugees and returnees on the situation in their country/area of origin.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR provided staff, office supplies, and equipment to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. Staff in a number of ministries involved in the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs received training in computer literacy, office management, accounting and the English language. Training was also been provided to NGO partners.

Shelter/Other infrastructure: Some 52,000 families received building materials (beams, lintels, windows, doors and tools). Beneficiaries also received cash as compensation for loss of earnings whilst constructing houses. UNHCR established and maintained transit and encashment centres, prepared the site for an IDP settlement in Kandahar, maintained IDP camps in the west, and renovated offices for MoRR.

Transport/Logistics: UNHCR funded 20 warehouses and distribution centres for food and non-food items as well as 12 encashment centres. It provided returning refugees with a transport grant, and financed the transportation of returning IDP groups and deportees.

Water: More than 3,200 water points (dug wells, tube wells, deepened wells and pipe schemes with stand pipes) were completed, along with bath houses and latrines. Selection of sites for all these facilities is made in consultation with women. The

programme benefited more than 168,000 families: 13,252 returnees, 107,863 IDPs and 47,771 people living in returnee and IDP communities.

Organization and implementation

Management

At the beginning of the reporting period, UNHCR's office in Afghanistan had one office of the Chief of Mission (Kabul), six sub-offices (Kabul, Gardez, Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar), two field offices (Ghazni and Bamyan), 16 field units and one liaison office in Islamabad, Pakistan. The field office in Ghazni was closed in November 2003.

In 2003, UNHCR planned for a 41 per cent reduction of staff in 2004, in view of a foreseen decrease and refocusing of activities. A comparative review process involving both HQ and field staff was carried out in November 2003.

Staff security: The reporting period saw a high level of security incidents, constituting a real and constant threat for UNHCR staff in Afghanistan. UNHCR ensured that all field offices, including staff guest-houses were equipped to meet the Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS).

Working with others

Following the change from the UN-coordinated programme group structure to the Afghan Government-led Consultative Group Structure, UNHCR was designated as the focal point for the Consultative Group on Returnees and IDPs. This meant that the Office continued to be responsible for facilitating the coordination of returnee and IDP matters under the umbrella of the Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). As well as cooperating with MoRR at national and provincial levels, the organization has forged closer links with MRRD, providing human and financial resources to the latter's Reintegration Unit. Regular contacts have also been maintained with the Ministry for Urban Development and Housing, particularly in connection with assistance to returnees in Kabul. UNHCR's assessment of costs for activities in Afghanistan is included in the Transitional Administration's Development Budget.

UNHCR worked within the UNAMA coordination structure, cooperating closely with other UN agencies. The Office is actively supporting the UNAMA Joint Support Unit's efforts to improve operational and programme coordination. It has established sub-agreements with 53 international NGOs and 34 Afghan NGOs, and with MoRR.

Overall assessment

The programme in 2003 was characterized by increased efforts both in the areas of initial reintegration (shelter, water and income-generation/cash-for-work activities) and longer-term development programmes (mainstreaming of returnee needs into national development planning). The process is slow and time-consuming, but crucial to the sustainable reintegration of returning refugees and IDPs.

The lower return rate in 2003 (compared with the previous year) can be attributed to instability and economic underdevelopment in areas of potential high return (south-east and central highlands), a cautious view of the limited impact to date of large-scale development programmes (e.g. the Government's National Solidarity Programme) and the slow imposition of the rule of law throughout the country.

Lack of security was the most significant impediment to operations in 2003 and is likely to remain an issue throughout 2004. UNHCR is therefore increasing its cooperation with local implementing partners, and relying more on staff from the provincial Department for Returnees and Reintegration and that of Rural Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development to monitor operations - with technical support from UNHCR.

Conditions in Afghanistan are, nevertheless, generally improving as the successful adoption of the National Constitution illustrates. UNHCR's 2003 strategy for intensifying reintegration efforts as part of a "governmentalized 4Rs approach" is beginning to bear fruit.

Offices

Kabul

Asadabad
Bamiyan
Cheghcheran
Chakhansur
Dand Wapatan
Dilaram
Faizabad
Farah
Gardez
Ghazni
Herat
Islam-Qala
Jaji Maydan
Jalalabad
Kandahar
Khost
Kunduz
Lashkar gah
Maimana
Mazar-i-Sharif
Mohmand Dara
Pul-I-Khumri
Qala-I-Naw
Sar-I-Pul
Shagali
Spin Boldak
Thorkham
Zaranj

Partners

Government agencies

Department of Women Affairs
Ministry of Public Health
Ministry of Repatriation
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development

NGOs

Abu Muslim Khorasany Rehabilitation Unit
Action contre la faim
Actionaid
Afghan Commission for Human Rights
Afghan Development Foundation
Afghan Planning Agency
Afghan Reconstruction and Development Unit
Afghan Reconstruction Movement
Afghan Red Crescent Society
Afghan Rehabilitation and Agriculture Organization
Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation
Agency for Rehabilitation of Villages
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
Ansari Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan
Associate Experts in Management and Development
British Broadcasting Corporation
Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk
CARE
Catholic Relief Services
Central Asia Development Group
Children Fund Afghanistan
Community Development Association
Cooperation centre for Afghanistan
Cooperazione e Sviluppo
Cooperazione Internazionale
Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
Coordination of Rehabilitation and Development Service for Afghanistan
Country Development Unit
Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
Drug Control and Coordination Unit
Ghor Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Organization
Guardians
Health Net International
Hewad Reconstruction Service
Human Dignity Society



Humanitarian Assistance Europe Foundation
Independent Humanitarian Services Association
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Rescue Committee
Intersos
Islamic Relief Agency
Maison d'aide au développement des économies rurales
Malteser Hilfsdienst
Multi Sectoral Development Organization
Newsaz Services
Norwegian Project Office
Norwegian Refugee Council
Ockenden International
Organization for Humanitarian Assistance
Peace Winds
People in Need Foundation
Radda Barnen/Save the Children
Re-construction Pioneers
Rubaru Training and Advice
Samaritan's Purse
Sherzaad Reconstruction Organization
Shuhada Organization
Sian Association Rehabilitation Service
Solidarités
South-west Afghanistan and Balochistan Association for Coordination
South-west Rehabilitation Council for Afghanistan
Voluntary Association for the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
Watan Rehabilitation Organization
Welfare and Relief Organization for Reconstruction
Women Activities and Social Services Association
ZOA Vluchtelingen zorg/Refugee Care

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
National Lawyers Association of Afghanistan
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNVs

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' projects	
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	notes	Annual and supplementary programme budgets
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	0	19,703,912	19,703,912		724,532
Community Services	0	340,508	340,508		611,414
Crop Production	0	0	0		377,412
Domestic Needs/Household Support	15,938	137,093	153,031		1,583,750
Education	0	0	0		145,327
Food	0	0	0		25,908
Forestry	0	0	0		43,409
Health/Nutrition	0	131,784	131,784		201,098
Income Generation	0	4,732,909	4,732,909		1,234,523
Legal Assistance	158,244	1,850,815	2,009,059		257,443
Livestock	0	0	0		3,761
Operational Support (to Agencies)	0	2,981,057	2,981,057		1,969,223
Sanitation	0	0	0		309,077
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	0	14,155,431	14,155,431		11,710,757
Transport/Logistics	0	11,300,576	11,300,576		3,764,809
Water (non-agricultural)	0	2,611,325	2,611,325		1,839,200
Transit Accounts	0	1,995	1,995		1,309
Instalments with Implementing Partners	57,516	15,298,946	15,356,462		(8,759,634)
Sub - total Operational	231,698	73,246,351	73,478,049		16,043,320
Programme Support	0	5,300,666	5,300,666		732,389
Sub - total Disbursements / Deliveries	231,698	78,547,017	78,778,715	(3)	16,775,709
Unliquidated Obligations	55,000	11,885,018	11,940,019	(3)	0 (5)
Total	286,698	90,432,035	90,718,734	(1) (3)	16,775,709
Instalments with Implementing Partners					
Payments Made	215,760	32,215,887	32,431,647		21,028,866
Reporting Received	158,244	16,916,941	17,075,185		29,788,500
Balance	57,516	15,298,946	15,356,462		(8,759,634)
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		9,680,589
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0		917,243
Currency Adjustment	0	0	0		(3,712)
Outstanding 31 December	57,516	15,298,946	15,356,462		0
Unliquidated Obligations					
Outstanding 1st January	0	0	0		21,895,285 (5)
New Obligations	286,698	90,432,035	90,718,734	(1)	0
Disbursements	231,698	78,547,017	78,778,715	(3)	16,775,709 (5)
Cancellations	0	0	0		5,119,576 (5)
Outstanding 31 December	55,000	11,885,018	11,940,019	(3)	0 (5)

Figures which can be cross-referenced to the Accounts:

- (1) Annex to Statement 1
- (3) Schedule 3
- (5) Schedule 5